

LITTLE Rivet Sports lasted just five minutes against the power of Wycombe Wanderers in Saturday's Berks and Bucks Senior Cup quarter-final at Aylesbury F.C. That's how long it took the Blues to score the first goal and then the floodgates opened.

Four goals in eight minutes — including a burst of two in two minutes — put the Rothmans Isthmian League champions and Cup holders 5-0 up with 32 minutes of the match played. A couple of second half goals sealed Wycombe's largest victory of the season.

While revelling in the Wanderers' goal tally, however, we should spare a thought for Rivets, the brave Hellenic League works team who had moved mountains to get this far. Previous to this game they had beaten teams like Burnham, Abingdon and Maidenhead United and even when they were trailing by five goals, they never gave up trying against impossible odds and never reverted to fouling their superior opponents.

But the truth is, Rivets, for all their bravery, were completely outclassed by a vastly superior team. And Wycombe's football was absolutely first class, considering the appalling conditions at Aylesbury's ground. I have never seen such a poor playing surface. There was water laying on the pitch, other parts were covered with sand, while the rest was just a quagmire even before the players stepped onto the ground.

Referee R. T. Buckingham inspected the pitch before the kick-off and decided play was possible — a decision that must have been greeted with mixed feelings by Wycombe. Having spent the last four Saturdays involved with the Allied Cup, they certainly didn't want to waste any more time with a postponement. On the other hand, constructive football was obviously going to be exceedingly difficult on this surface and the mud seemed likely to help Rivets rather than the Blues.

This was Rivets' ace card. They must have been banking on the pitch bringing Wycombe down to their level. After the first few minutes, however, it never looked on.

Wycombe were brimming full of confidence. Their passing went from strength to strength, carving great gaps in the Rivets' defence as players ran onto the ball with acres of space around them. Goalkeeper Chris Edworthy was quickly into action.

After pushing Howard Kennedy's long drive over the crossbar, Edworthy and Rivets faced their first corner — and promptly paid the price of faulty marking. Keith Mead went up for the kick and head firmly down and into the net from Kennedy's flag kick. This early goal was the foundation for Wycombe's first half blitz.

Edworthy almost punched another corner into his own net and then Rivets produced their first and almost only attack of the first half. Keith Symonds struck a free kick into the "wall" and Dick Peel lofted in the rebound which flew over John Maskell and clipped the

Rivets 1, Wycombe Wanderers 7

REPORT BY STUART EARP

crossbar. After that, the goalkeeper had only to collect the occasional pass back.

Wanderers began peppering in shots from every angle and it came as no surprise when Dave Alexander, who had a fine game, made it 2-0 in the 24th minute to begin the four-goal barrage. His 20-yard drive gave Edworthy no chance and four minutes later Kennedy took Wycombe's fourth corner of the match.

The ball swung into the six-yard box, clipped the underside of the crossbar, came down onto the upright and then bounced into the net. Three minutes later the same player made it four after Mead took a short free-kick to Evans, collected the return and slipped the ball to Steve Perrin. He crossed from the bye-line and Kennedy thundered the ball past a bemused Rivets' defence. Just 60 seconds later it was five. By now Wycombe looked likely to score whenever they attacked and this

time Kennedy blocked a weak clearance and set up a simple chance for Perrin to score.

As the Works team trudged off to the changing rooms at half-time they must have feared the worst. But their second half grit and determination, coupled with Wycombe's over-confidence and individuality, made sure the score was kept within reasonable bounds. And after Kennedy had missed his hat-trick by hitting the upright with a deliberate shot, Rivets shocked everyone by scoring the most popular goal of the game. Trevor Quinn was the scorer, tapping the ball home after John Goodair had beaten both Paul Griffiths and Mead.

That rejuvenated the Rivets side and with sheer hard work and guts, they began to break up Wycombe's over-elaborate attacks. There was never any danger of a Rivets' revival but they made a lot of friends by never giving up.

Further Wycombe goals were inevitable despite the Works

teams' bravery. Alexander scored the sixth in the 76th minute after Evans — who came into the side for Tony Horseman — beat two men and crossed low and hard. Evans himself hit the final goal after 83 minutes, steering the ball home at the second attempt after Edworthy had only parried Alexander's shot.

There was just time for Peel to make a spectacular goal-line clearance from substitute Graham Mackenzie before the final whistle. To pay their tribute to a team of fellow giant-killers, the Wanderers formed a tunnel to clap Rivets off the pitch — a fitting gesture to 11 players who had just completed the biggest game in their history.

WYCOMBE: J. Maskell; P. Griffiths, K. Mead, A. Phillips, P. Birdseye; M. Holifield, H. Kennedy, D. Alexander, D. Evans, K. Searle (sub. G. Mackenzie 51 minutes), S. Perrin.

RIVETS: C. Edworthy; G. Jackson, K. Archibald, R. Barber, P. Gregory; R. Robertson, R. Baker, R. Peel; K. Symonds, J. Goodair, T. Quinn; Sub. B. Harrison (not used).

Referee: R. Buckingham.
Half-time: 5-0. **Goalscorers:**
Wycombe: Alexander 2 (24, 76), Kennedy 2 (28, 31), Perrin (32), Mead (4), Evans (83). **Rivets:** Quinn (50).
Official attendance: 1,522.